

What others say...

The First and the Last...

To the editor:

The Begining Of Inupiaqs,
Our Creator,
Our Powerful, Ancestors,
The Heavens,
The Stars,
The Moons,
The Planets,
The Earth,
We Call Earth, Our Home,
The Inupiaqs, Our Ancestors,
The Birds, In The Skys,
The Animals, On Our Lands,
The Marine Mammals, In The
Oceans,
The Inupiaqs, Enjoys Life, Hunting,
Plus Eating, Sharing, Staying Alive,
The Ice, The Snow, The Rain, The
Waters,
We Drink From Lands, Oceans, And
Skys,
the Lands, The Oceans, The Skies,
We Lived On, Going Any Where
Else,
The Brothers, The Sisters, On Earth,
On Top On The World, Our Relatives,
We Are The First, And The Last,
To Live On Earth, As Inupiaqs,

Eskimos,
We Hunt For Food, And Clothing,
For Tools And Weapons,
The Inupiaqs, Eskimos,
Still Alive On Earth,
Never Changes, From Old To Young,
Happy And Brave Hunters, On Earth,
The Shamans On Earth, Evil Or
Good,
The Skys, The Lands, The Oceans,
The Inupiaqs, Eskimos, Owns,
On Top Of The Earth,
68 Degrees, North Latitude,
Hunger On, Old And Young Inupiaqs.
Eskimos,
Knows No Law, On Earth, Our Home
Lands,
We Have Lived, From Begining, To
Today,
We Have Not Changed,
Since Time Immemorial,
We Still Are, The Real Inupiaqs,
Eskimos,
On Our World, On Top Of The Earth,
Our Home Lands, For Inupiaqs,
Eskimos.

—Harry T. Ipalook
Barrow

Readers request support for HB 130

Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

Dear Sen. Ferguson,

Citizens across the state of Alaska satisfactorily remember the treatment given HB 130 last April by representatives of the Alaska Legislature who voted 29 to 10 for passage. The large favorable majority this signaled broad statewide recognition of the value of the HB 130. Continuing in the momentum of that positive campaign begun last session, we request your legislative support for the HB 130 during this second session of the Fourteenth Legislature.

As most Alaskans recognize, the state took a great step forward in the field of constructive labor relations when it granted certificated employees of a school district the right to negotiate on matters pertaining to their employment. The current proposal, HB 130, promises that **classified employees** of a school district (similar to teachers, police and fire fighters) will also receive the right to negotiate and bargain on matters pertaining to their employment.

In any school district, it is extremely obvious (but not protected or guaranteed by law) that classified employees such as: secretaries, cooks, maintenance persons, and aides are important contributors to the educational process. Consequently, won't these educational support persons benefit greatly when they are finally allowed to organize and negotiate for the purpose of improving their employment conditions? The teachers of Alaska wish bargaining rights extended to classified employees. the National Education Association of Alaska, the state's largest teachers' organization, representing over 80 percent of Alaska's teachers, went on

public record at their assembly, (Feb. 1986) to extend full membership rights to classified employees. Won't you too, as a state legislator, support bargaining rights for classified by promoting HB 130?

Under the present legal situation, school boards are not required to negotiate about classified employees' working conditions, benefits, or lay off procedures. As you surely recognize, if HB 130 is reported out of committee and passes in the senate, school boards will be required to sit down, listen to, and bargain with classified employees about these important issues. This is precisely what we support. We support the right of classified employees to increase their protections and rights under the law as contained in HB 130.

Another provision of HB 130 ensures that bargaining on the part of school boards and public employees takes place in an orderly and inexpensive way. This provision of HB 130 is known as "last best offer binding arbitration". "Last best offer binding arbitration" means that if and when negotiations (bargaining) ever break down and pass to an independent arbitrator, that arbitrator is obligated to choose "the best" of the last two proposals before him. What is not acknowledged by the opponents of HB 130 is that the arbitrator (who must be an Alaskan) has no authority to impose any of his own judgements upon the disagreeing parties. Nor, in this kind of arbitration, can the arbitrator force compromise upon the disagreeing parties. Rather, HB 130 requires that the arbitrator select only "the best" of the last two local offers put before him. This offer (the best one of the two) will become the contract language. It is noteworthy that school boards oppose

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this provision, yet HB 130 would mean that school boards would be guaranteed to win every dispute decided by an arbitrator each time theirs is the last best offer on any issue.

Another under publicized fact about "last best offer binding arbitration" is that in states that already have it, arbitration seldom takes place! In these states, negotiating usually proceeds in a straight forward manner to a **rapid and inexpensive conclusion.**

Settlements occur quicker in these states because neither side takes unjustified, radical, or dogmatic positions which an arbitrator would quickly see as unjustified, and therefore not "the best". In Wisconsin, for example, after nine years, only seven percent of 5,520 contract negotiations have even gone to "last best offer binding arbitration"! Quick settlements please school boards, teachers, and the public. Everyone gets more for their money.

Finally, we recognize that governing school districts is not easy. Being a board member has even been called the toughest job in America. We believe HB 130 will make governing a school district somewhat easier and more efficient. Teachers — under the threat of binding arbitration against them — will bargain in a reasonable and orderly way! So will school boards!

For these reasons, and because Gov. Sheffield has sponsored HB 130, we petition your consideration and final support for HB 130. We also want to thank you for many past efforts on behalf of education in Northwest Alaska and the state.

Sincerely yours,
Mike Warme
Pres.-elect, NAEA
Noorvik

Darlene Heckler
HB 130, Project Coordinator
Noatak